

WANDERING STARS

SERMONS FOR THE
JUNIOR CONGREGATION

—||—
ANDREW HANSEN

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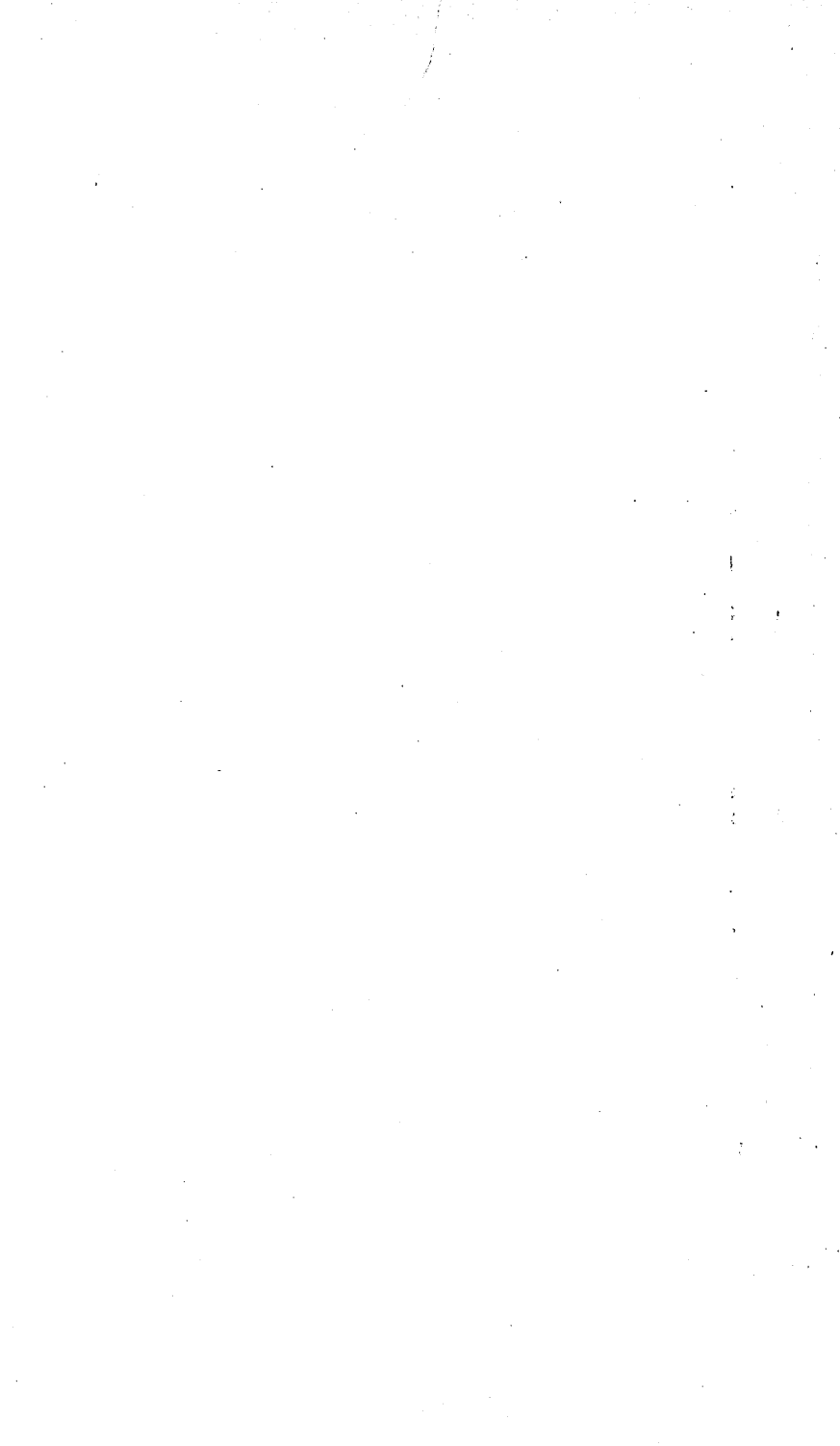
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WANDERING STARS

ANDREW HANSEN



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*Ten-Minute Sermons for
the Junior Congregation*

By

REV. ANDREW HANSEN



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WANDERING STARS

WANDERING STARS

EVERY boy and girl must be interested in the stars. Indeed, I think that many of them are shining just for boys and girls. There must be one star up there for every boy and girl. They are the jewels of the heavens, or, as you children have doubtless learned it, every one of them is "Like a diamond in the sky."

Sometimes they are like children I have met, as well as being like diamonds. They hide their faces, as if they were bashful, not behind a mother's dress, but behind the light of the sun and of the moon.

When the sky is clear there are about six or seven thousand which can be seen, but only about two or two and a half thousand at one time. The great Lick telescope in Chicago can find about one hundred million of them. Suppose you children had an eye like that!

Yet that must be the kind of an eye that God

has, for He sees and keeps in His care every single one of the one and an half million people who live upon this earth. And then He watches every star too and cares for that.

But the stars are not only beautiful as jewels, they are also law abiding, doing that which God has appointed for them. They not only twinkle at boys and girls but they move as our world does, in the paths which God has given to them.

But the book of Jude in the New Testament tells us about what it calls "Wandering Stars," which must be those that get out of their courses and go roaming around the skies, spending the night in any old place. Suppose these wanderers should bump into other stars or should get in the way of the earth, what do you think would happen? Our little world has a path upon which it must travel too and if one of those big stars should ever get in its way I suppose that this world of ours would just have to bump into it. That would be a terrible situation, wouldn't it? Indeed, I am afraid it would shake off some of the people

and then where do you suppose they would go to if they ever fell off this earth? A wandering star would get the whole universe into trouble.

But this scripture text really refers to people and not to the stars at all. Men and women too have a path upon which God wants them to walk but sometimes they wander away from this and become what Jude calls "Wandering Stars."

In Pilgrim's Progress, the pilgrim, Christian by name, would sometimes wander from his path and then invariably he would get into trouble. On one occasion poor Christian became a wandering star and getting off his right path, found himself in the power of Giant Despair. The giant put him in a dark dungeon in his castle, which was called Doubting Castle, where "they lay from Wednesday morning till Saturday night, without one bit of bread or drop of drink, or light, or any to ask how they did." Christian nearly perished at this time simply because he had wandered.

The New Testament tells us of a wandering

star who left his Father's house and lost himself in a far country. He too got out of the path that God had set for him and he was lost for a time. You can read about him in the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel.

Boys and girls, never become wandering stars. Keep in the "Jesus Road," as the Indians call it. Turn neither to the right hand nor to the left, but

"Walk in the light the Lord has given
To guide thy steps aright;
His Holy Spirit, sent from heav'n,
Can cheer the darkest night."

THE COURTESY GOLD PIECE

LAST Christmas time I was in one of New York's big department stores, and I couldn't help but notice large placards tacked up all over the store. After seeing several of them I stopped to read what one of them had to say, and I discovered that it contained a letter from one of America's greatest merchants to the people who came to shop in his store.

The title of this letter was "The Courtesy Gold Piece," and it contained a request to the thousands of people, who just at that time of the year were so busy buying things in that store, that they pay for their purchases not only with the good money of the United States Government but also with this golden coin of courtesy.

The letter described this kind of money as the oldest ever used. Adam and Eve used it in the Garden of Eden, and ever since men and

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women had been using it, and it was always at a premium. People were usually only too glad to receive it.

I take it that all this was only a kind request that the patrons of that store be polite and considerate and courteous to the hard-worked salesgirls. It was a good sermon, wasn't it? I should like to have everybody as rich as Cræsus in that kind of golden money.

On Christmas day I saw a little boy who had just received a new bank for a Christmas present. His father told me that he wanted to teach his boy the good habit of saving.

You Juniors, also, have banks, and every Sunday you are bringing them to church for me to put something in them. Well, to-day, I bring you this golden coin of courtesy — put it in your bank. But don't keep it there long; spend it on the first person you meet. Be courteous to all. Oh, but don't you know all the rules? Then follow this one:

“To be truly polite is to do and say
The kindest thing in the kindest way.”

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This rule will carry you through nicely and furnish for you a way by which to pay out this golden coin of courtesy.

BOUNTIFUL EYES

WHAT wonderful organs of our bodies are our eyes! They ought to be accounted the eighth wonder of the world. Though they are seeing thousands of objects every day, yet every time something is seen these eyes of ours are sure to send a report of the same to the brain. Indeed, they even take photographs of the things seen and send these to the brain also so that we are able to form our estimation of that which has been seen.

But if the eyes are trained then we are able to see even better than before. I have heard of hunters who have trained their eyes to see so accurately that they are able to shoot a nut from the mouth of a squirrel. And Indians sometimes can shoot a penny from between a boy's fingers and still leave five fingers on that boy's hand. Out on the sea it is the sailor with trained eye who first sees a ship.

I have heard of a physician whose eyes were so trained to find diseases that if something were the matter with the inside of someone's throat he didn't need to hunt around to try to discover what the trouble was, but on the other hand, his eyes immediately centered upon the diseased place. He was a regular Sherlock Holmes in his power to see things.

But along with the eyes that are trained we want particularly to have the eyes that are "bountiful," as the Wise Man calls them, (Prov. 22:9) that is, generous eyes. Wouldn't it be fine if our eyes were so trained and so bountiful that we could see all of the good things in the lives of other people. In fact only bountiful eyes can ever be trained in this way. But these are eyes that mothers usually have. And do you know how their eyes have been trained to see all of the nice things in the lives of boys and girls? By having a heart of love. It is this which enables the eye to take pictures of the pleasant things in the lives of others and to send back to our brains such messages that we are generous in our judgments.

It is also this which gives the eye power to see the needs of others as well. It is the bountiful eye which seeks to give people clothing and food and sympathy and affection, and so to make the world happier and brighter. "He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor."

Therefore, when we see someone in need during this week, or if we see that someone has made some mistakes, let us not look out with the eye of selfishness or of criticism but rather with those blessed eyes which are bountiful.

OVERFLOWING CUPS

I SUPPOSE the Psalm which children like best of all and which is the first they usually commit to memory is the 23d, the Shepherd's Psalm. It might almost be called the Children's Psalm for this reason. And many people think that this one is the greatest of them all. I have heard of a man who said that he didn't know whether the world was getting any better because there was no one to-day who could write anything so beautiful as the twenty-third psalm.

You will remember that in this psalm, David, the psalmist, pictures the Lord first as a Shepherd and then as a Host. And as a Host the Lord has prepared a table for David even in the presence of his enemies. No doubt there were many good things on that table but the thing which must have been most interesting to David was the cup, for he says of it "my cup runneth over."

I think David must have had his own life in mind when he wrote of that cup, and it must have seemed to him that his life was so filled with blessing from the Lord that it was just overflowing into the lives of other people. And what a fine thing it is to have that kind of a life! Many people have lives into which God's goodness flows but there it stays and it never flows out to other lives.

The life of Jesus was also such an overflowing cup. God poured His love into it but Jesus could never keep it all for Himself and it just flowed out into the great life of the world. To-day we are rejoicing because of this love which has overflowed from the life of our Lord. And on this communion day we ought to remember this true "cup of blessing," that is, the life of Jesus which overflowed from the cross into all the world.

You children too can be overflowing cups to those about you. Thousands of people in the world are thirsty and just dying for a drink out of our cups. If we will but let our lives overflow into the lives of our relations and

friends someday, perhaps, our lives will overflow so much with the blessings of God that even the thousands in the distant places of the world will get some blessing from them. Let your life be, like David's, an overflowing cup.

“WATCH YOUR STEP”

I WAS in New York a week ago, where I got a sermon for you boys and girls. I was sitting in a subway train going uptown and I noticed that whenever we came to a station, while some people would get up and go out and others would come in, the guard on the train kept crying out these words: “Watch your step. Watch your step.”

I listened to this warning cry and thought that he was a pretty good preacher and that he was preaching a great sermon to New York City, if the people only had ears to hear it. At some places, particularly at a curve, the entrance to the car would not be close to the platform and, consequently, unless the passengers did watch their step they were in danger of having a bad fall on their coming in or going out of the car.

But I wonder if the sermon was remembered

only for those few minutes and because of that one danger of passing in or out of the trains. I suspect that when those people got up onto the street they would still need to watch their step for, unless they did, their feet might soon be taking them to places where they ought never to go and having them doing things they ought never to do, and this fall would be worse than the first.

In New York City, as, indeed, everywhere, men and women often fall and hurt themselves badly, yes, even disfigure their characters eternally simply because they didn't watch where they were going. I pity a boy whose feet take him to places of dishonesty or unkindness or selfishness or any form of wickedness. His soul will get terribly hurt. He would be like the man who permits his feet to take him into a saloon. He is going to have a dreadful fall with most serious injuries to his life. The poor drunkard is the man who never watched his step.

In the Book of Psalms (27:23) we read that "The steps of a good man are ordered by

the Lord." That is, to walk securely, and so as to please the Lord, we must trust in the Lord to guide us. And I think this is a good way by which we may watch the steps we take. Let us let the Lord guide us. If we know what is His will and law and trust Him to enable us to walk accordingly we shall keep in His way and our steps will be safe.

THE NEW YEAR BABY

DID you children ever hear about the little insects that are born into the world, live only a few hours, and then die of old age? Well, last Friday night an old man died who, however, was really only one year old and yet he just tottered into his grave from old age amid the groans and yells of thousands of people. His name was Mr. Nineteen Hundred and Fifteen, as you, no doubt, have already guessed, for all of you have known this gentleman all of his life.

But at the same time that this old man was dying amid the groans of the multitude a new and big Baby was born amid the cheers of that same multitude. His name is Nineteen Hundred and Sixteen, and, I was thinking, what should we do with this Baby?

New Year's is a time for resolutions. A great many people at this time of the year make

new resolves that they won't do certain things or that they will do certain other things. I think this is a very old custom, for I have read in the Bible, in the Second Book of Samuel (14:26) of a man, whose name I shall not tell you but which you can look up for yourself, who cut his hair but once a year. He cut it at the end of every year so that, I suppose, he would be able to begin the new year with a clean shaven head. Perhaps we can make some resolves in regard to this new Baby which God has given us.

Do you boys and girls know that there actually are people in the world who don't like babies and who, therefore, don't like to live with them? Perhaps some of you children sometimes feel a little that way. Well, everybody must live with this Baby whether he wants to or not and wouldn't it be a good resolve that we might make, that as far as living with this Baby is concerned we are going to try to like it and to make the best of it?

Then I suggest another resolve, viz., that as the days go by we try more and more to get

acquainted with this new Baby. If we should do that then at the end of the year we would know the whole year and I think we will have quite a bit of information just through such an ever growing acquaintance.

Here, then, are just two suggestions as to what to do with the New Year Baby—learn to like him and get acquainted with him.

THE LORD'S LIBRARY

YOU all have seen books that are so far human that they speak and have backs and win the affections of men and women, but have you ever seen books that have heads and hands and mouths and eyes and ears and feet? Indeed, these books are able not only to see and talk but even to walk so that they are really the only true travelling libraries. You don't have to put them into a box and ship them by freight or express, but they themselves are able to go from place to place. And these live books know where they are going and they are able to see their way and even to sing on their journey.

Well, Jesus has a great library of just that kind of books. The Apostle says: "Ye are an epistle of Christ," and you boys and girls as epistles, that is, as books of Christ, constitute the Lord's Library. Like many other books these are very seldom at home, for the Lord

lends them out to the world so that they might be known and read of men.

And isn't it fine to be a living book in the Lord's Library? In the first place, like a book, we have a message to our lives. I suppose that your fathers and mothers would call it the message of God's grace. Then, also, when we walk up and down the street the world reads us by the things we do and say.

I say it is a fine thing but that is true provided the message in the book is a good one. Some books ought never to be read because they contain improper or even evil messages. Then there are books, which sometimes you can see on bookshelves, which have beautiful bindings but when you open them the message they contain isn't like the bindings by any means. Perhaps there is no real message at all.

Of course to be the best kind of a book in this wonderful library we ought to have both good bindings and good messages. That is, we ought to look nice on the outside and really be nice on the inside. We ought to have good conduct and good character.

Everybody likes a book which has pretty covers. In the library of Jesus the same is also true. Everybody likes a boy or girl with good behaviour. If a boy is polite and kind and gentlemanly people praise him just for that. If they were thinking of the Lord's Library they would say "That book has beautiful bindings."

But better even than a book's binding is its message. And this is also true of this library of our Lord. If a boy has a message of honesty or courage or virtue written on his face then most of all will people speak his praise. They will say that he has character as well as good conduct. He has a message as well as a beautiful binding.

This, then, is the way to adorn our Lord's Library. This is the way to be a book which will bring honour to Jesus. Men will praise the great "Librarian" if they behold books like this. Let us during this new week honour the Lord both by our behaviour and by our true character — by our bindings and by our messages.

CONTRARY WINDS

IN the Book of the Acts there is an account of how the Apostle Paul was taken from the city of Jerusalem to the city of Rome as a prisoner. He hadn't done anything that was wrong only while he had been preaching the gospel others had been wronging him. They had been persecuting him, stoning him and beating him and putting him into prison until, finally, being a Roman citizen, he appealed to the Roman Government for protection. So they took him from Jerusalem to Rome, the capital of the Empire, where he might present his case before the emperor himself.

While they were taking him in their little sailing vessel they came to the Island of Cyprus where, so the account runs, the "winds were contrary." (Acts 27:4.) Doubtless you know that it is difficult enough to get anywhere in a sailboat in the best of seasons yet alone when

the winds are opposing, but the captain of that little vessel just ran it up under the shelter of the Island so that it became a protection for them and they were able to continue their journey even against contrary winds.

Well, I suspect that you boys and girls sometimes meet with contrary winds and I wonder what you do with them. I mean those things that would hinder our progress, if we let them, such as the hard duties to be done, the heavy burdens to be borne, the disappointments to be faced and the temptations to be overcome.

Sometimes these also just take our breath away and make us work exceptionally hard to make progress against them and yet they, too, are the kind of winds that put colour on our cheeks and give us good appetites and make us sleep well at night. So that the best thing to do is just to overcome the hard things and thus become strong.

I have read of a peculiar tree that grows only in the country of Spain. It is one of the grandest trees in the world, sometimes having

a trunk with a circumference of fifty feet and growing to a great height as well. But the particular peculiarity of that tree is that it grows only on the northern side of the hills and mountains. That is the side of the tempests and the cold shade and the contrary winds; so that this tree gains its grandeur by facing the north and fighting the battle with the stormy winds and overcoming them. And I think that boys and girls also gain their grandeur just by facing winds that are contrary and overcoming them. I think that the boy who is always saying "I can't" before a hard task won't be very strong when he becomes a man.

But sometimes the tasks may be a little too hard for our strength, or the winds may blow too strong for us and then, perhaps, it would be well to get within a shelter, where we might get some protection. Do you remember sometimes we sing:

"The Lord's our Rock, in Him we hide,
A shelter in the time of storm;
Secure whatever ill betide,
A shelter in the time of storm."

Yes, I think that when our temptations are using up all of our strength, or our tasks are making us weary, that the best thing to do is to go to the shelter of the side of Jesus. He will give us new strength and enable us to endure even in the greatest difficulty.

THE SPOTS ON THE LEOPARD

IN the Book of Jeremiah there is a peculiar question. The prophet asks (13:23) "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" Of course the answer is "no." A black man can't make himself white, nor can a leopard change those brown and black spots on his skin. Nor, indeed, can any other animal. If you have a white horse he will always remain so, and he would be considered decidedly peculiar if he didn't. No animal can change its skin.

Now what the prophet means to say is that just as a leopard can't change his spots so a man can't change those habits which govern him. If he has always been accustomed to the doing of evil he will go on doing it, while on the other hand, if he has been accustomed to the doing of good this is what he will do all the rest of his life. The leopard can't change his spots.

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This, therefore, is a most important truth for boys and girls because now you are determining the colour of your characters or forming those habits by which later you will be governed. If now you are forming a habit of industry by and by that habit will control you and you will be an industrious man or woman. On the other hand if you now are forming the habit of laziness then by and by that habit will govern you and you will always be a lazy man.

So of the habits of honesty or dishonesty, of selfishness or unselfishness, of generosity or meanness, of temperance, or, indeed, of any other virtue or vice. What you will be as men and women all depends on what you are making of yourselves now. So you see how important it is to get started right. That is the reason why we have Sunday Schools and Day Schools, churches and pastors, mothers and fathers.

The reason why a full grown and able bodied man goes to prison for some crime he has committed is because he got started straight for that prison when he was a boy. Perhaps

it was the habit of disobedience which he formed for himself by disobeying his father or mother or teacher and, afterward, this was one of the habits which governed his life. And when the law of the State said so and so this man just disobeyed that law and the result was that the strong arm of the law took hold of him and put him in prison;

On the other hand the reason why a boy, like Abraham Lincoln, though born in a log cabin, ends his career in a place of honour is also because he started as a boy straight for the place of honour. He formed the habit of industry and right thinking and doing the best possible and seizing every opportunity and the like and, afterward, when these habits governed him they just carried him along to the position of greatness.

So you see the important thing is to get the right colour to our characters now when they are being made, for afterward they can never be changed. The leopard can't change his spots.

THE SHADOWS OF THE EVENING

MOST boys and girls, I think, like the day better than the night. Indeed, I do myself and yet there is something most interesting about the night too — the time of “The Shadows of the Evening,” as it is called in the Old Testament.

In the evening, when the sun is setting I suppose you have noticed the shadows, how they lengthen and grow bigger and heavier. The flower bushes at your side send forth a shadow two or three times longer than the bushes are high, while a man has a shadow on the ground about one hundred feet long and houses and trees have them nearly a quarter of a mile in length. And all the while that the sun is sinking lower and lower these shadows are increasing until, when the sun finally sets, there isn't anything left but the shadow — and it is night. Yes, night is only a shadow.

Whenever we hear, therefore, of a boy being afraid of the night he really is only afraid of a shadow, isn't he? It is the shadow of the earth as it hides the sun, and this shadow is so big and heavy that we have darkness as the result.

Sometimes, when conditions are just right, the shadow of the earth covers the face of the moon and then we have an eclipse. In the olden time superstitious people used to be frightened at such times but to-day we can laugh and say that they too were afraid of a shadow.

It makes one think, perhaps, of February 2d, and the ground hog. For, no doubt, you know the story about this little animal that on that day he comes up out of his hole, where he has been all Winter, but if he should happen to see his shadow it frightens him so much that he runs immediately back into the hole again where he hides himself for six weeks before he dares to come up once more. He too is afraid of a shadow.

But some worlds have no nights and, therefore, no shadows of evening, because they have

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two or three suns, instead of one, such as we have, and when one sun sets there is another shining to banish away any shadows which the setting sun might want to cast. If we lived in such a world we should have to learn how to sleep in the day time, wouldn't we? Yet on our own world there are places where they have a day which is six months long. In Scotland I have seen quite a bit of light at half past ten at night while in the morning it got daylight so early that I could never tell just when that important event took place. It was always daylight before I got awake in the morning.

But I am afraid that if it were always like that and the people there didn't have very much night time they wouldn't know a great many things about our universe and also about God its maker. One of the wonderful things about the time of shadows is that we can look up into the heavens and see that there are other worlds and suns and planets and learn something about the grandeur and glory of God. The shadows of Evening hide the things of our own earth but

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they reveal, on the other hand, the things of the heavens above. "The heavens declare the glory of God" because of these evening shadows.

A BOY'S DREAM

It would be somewhat of a needless question for me to ask you children "Did you ever dream?" for 'most everybody I know has had a dream sometime in life. Some people dream only when they are asleep while others dream even when they are awake. I wonder if you boys and girls have ever dreamed when you have been awake and knew just what you were dreaming, and then I wonder what you would tell me if I were to ask you as did Jacob of his son Joseph (Gen. 37: 10) "What is this dream that thou hast dreamed?"

The boy Joseph had dreamed first that as he was binding sheaves in the field his sheaf arose and stood upright while the sheaves of his brothers came and bowed themselves down to his. Then again he dreamed and this time he dreamed that even the sun and moon and eleven stars also made obeisance to him.

I think that Joseph must have been dreaming such things when he was awake as well as when he was asleep. He must have been thinking all the time that when he became a man he was going to be a ruler over other men. Joseph was dreaming, just as you children do, I suppose, about what he was going to make of himself when he became a man.

I have read of a boy who also had a dream and he dreamed that the most prominent people of the village in which he lived all came to him and asked him to take their places in life, for they would soon have to give them up. First the rich man of the village came to him and asked this boy to take his place, then the judge came and the doctor and the minister and the farmer and many others and they all made of him this same request.

Then there came to him some others of that village and asked him the same thing. The drunkard came and told him that he was about to die in a drunkard's grave and he too asked this boy to take his place. Then the thief came to him out of the jail and the loafer from the

street corner and they too made the same request of him.

When he awoke that boy must surely have thought that he would have to take somebody's place in life and that place was being determined by what he was dreaming about then while he was a boy.

So I think that Joseph must have been dreaming when he was a boy that when he became a man he was going to be a ruler; Samuel must have dreamed when a boy of being a prophet; Solomon of being a wise man; Columbus of being a discoverer of a new world; Edison of being a great inventor; and Abraham Lincoln of being the emancipator of the black people.

What are you going to make of yourself when you become men and women? It will depend upon what you are dreaming about now. Your present ideals and aims for your own life will determine what you will become as men and women. "What is this dream that thou hast dreamed?"

GARDENING

IN this Springtime of the year I notice that almost everybody is busy making a garden. On the farms the men are planting their seeds while in the gardens near the house there is something to do for everyone. And I wonder just what a boy could possibly do these days without a spade or hoe or rake!

God is interested in our gardening, too, for the Bible says (Gen. 2:8) that He once "planted a garden eastward, in Eden." Indeed, about the first story of the Bible is that one about that garden which God planted.

I have heard a story, which was told by a young man from Korea, about a captain of a company of Korean soldiers who was leading his men over some mountains in Korea. After marching all day they came toward evening to a certain mountain, where it was thought there was a good place in which to pitch their camp.

While the soldiers were preparing for the night the captain climbed up to the top of the mountain exploring his surroundings. But when he reached the top the night came down so suddenly that he didn't have time to go back to camp so he had to sleep out on the mountain top.

Like Rip Van Winkle, this captain slept a very long time. Indeed, he slept for a hundred years. When he awoke he was beside a most wonderful palace. Not only was it very beautiful but its size especially filled the captain with amazement. This palace was so big that on the north side of it it was always winter, on the south side it was always summer, on the west it was always autumn, and on the east it was always spring.

Perhaps the reason why God planted a garden "Eastward in Eden" is because in the east it is always spring, the time when gardens should be planted.

But, how would you like to live in a house as big as that? Well, I think you do, for it

seems to me that that palace is something like God's Garden to-day. For, after all, the whole world is the Garden of God. And what a wonderful place it is! Its beauty of leaves and blossoms, of mountains and rivers, of woods and birds are all for us to enjoy. Ours is the pleasure of living in the Garden of God.

Over in the New Testament (John, 20: 15) it is told how Jesus one time was taken for a Gardener, and I think that Mary was not very far wrong either. Yes, Jesus is a Gardener and in the Springtime of our lives, that is, when we are young, He plants wonderful seeds in our hearts. If these seeds fall on good ground soon they begin to bear flowers, such as faith and love and joy and peace. Then, after a while, they bear fruit, such as the kindness which may fall from our fingers, or the politeness from our lips, or the pure thoughts of our minds. And don't you think, at this gardening time of the year, it might be a good thing just to try to cultivate the gardens of our hearts too? Indeed, I think that we are our

Lord's Under-gardeners to do just this thing. Let us, then, prepare a good soil for the Gospel seed and take good care of the young plants of Christ's love which are growing even now in the gardens of our hearts.

THE MOTHER AT THE CROSS

IN the Gospel of St. John (19: 25) there are these words: "There stood by the cross of Jesus His mother." And, boys and girls, that is just like mother, isn't it? She is always standing by where her children are bearing crosses. Otherwise, I suppose, we should have thought it strange that Mary, the mother of Jesus, should have been at the crucifixion, for she was probably not with Him on all of His preaching journeys. Yet when it comes to the time of the cross, behold, the mother is there! But since we know the spirit of "Mother" there would have been something strange if the mother of Jesus had not been with Him when He was in trouble. When you boys and girls are sick or hungry or when your clothes are torn or when you have any sorrows mother is always close by to help, isn't she?

Did you ever wonder why it is that mothers never seem to get weary of working and caring

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for their children? Sometimes they will work all day and then perhaps sit up all night caring for a sick boy and yet they never seem to think that they are doing too much for their children. It must be their love that enables them to do it all, don't you think so?

Then I think that we ought to try to help mother too with that same love and care that she shows to us. I think that just as she is always at our side when we have need so we ought to be at her side when she has need. Perhaps sometimes she may want an errand done or some work performed and then it would be nice to be at her side to satisfy her wishes.

In that way we shall be showing toward her that same kind of love that she has for us. And it won't take her long to discover that we are always by her side to help her because we love her too just as she loves us. And this was why Mary was always at the side of Jesus.

"At the cross her station keeping
Stood the mournful mother weeping,
Where He hung, the dying Lord;

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For her soul of joy bereaved,
Bowed with anguish deeply grieved,
Felt the sharp and piercing sword.

“Jesus, may her deep devotion,
Stir in me the same emotion,
Fount of love, Redeemer kind;
That my heart fresh ardour gaining,
And a purer love attaining,
May with Thee acceptance find.”

“THANK YOU”

NEXT Thursday is Thanksgiving Day, when the main thing that we do, or ought to do, is to give thanks to God who gives all things to us. A week ago I found one little girl who had already written a letter to Santa Claus and, like other children, she too had placed that letter by the side of the open fire place where old Santy could easily find it. I don't know what was in that letter. Perhaps this little girl knew that it was getting to be a busy time for the old gentleman and she would try to help him by doing her shopping early.

I wonder if any of you children have written letters to Santa yet. Do you think it is too early? Perhaps it is and yet it may be that this little girl wrote a “Thank you” for last Christmas time. I am sure that Santa would be glad to get such a letter at any time of the year, particularly at Thanksgiving time. Thanksgiving

comes before Christmas you know. And while we write letters to him in which we ask him to bring us something, wouldn't it be nice also to write letters to him in which we send him our "Thank yous" for the things he has already brought us?

It is this that we especially ought to do to God who gives us all things. Always to ask Him for something and then never to give thanks is selfish and ungrateful. Let us then keep this coming Thanksgiving Day by giving thanks to God when we are alone sometime during the day.

And this will make the world brighter for you I am sure. When we use a great many "Thank-yous" everything seems to go along so much smoother and life seems so much pleasanter.

Several days ago while I was driving along a country road I overtook a little boy and I asked him if he wouldn't like to have a ride. He gladly got in for he had a good distance to go and when I came to the place where he wanted to get out I stopped the car, and he

jumped out. But for a few minutes the car didn't seem to want to start. But when it heard a "Thank you, Mister, for the ride," the wheels began to go around immediately. Even the wheels of an auto, like the wheels of life, go better with the help of a "Thank you." The Psalmist says "It is a good thing to give thanks."

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea there seemed to be no one at all to give thanks to God for the gift of His Son to the world. So God sent the angels and they sang a "Thank you" up in the heavens with their song "Glory to God in the highest." The angels too thought it was a good thing to give thanks.

Let us do a "good thing," then, on next Thursday. Suppose we all do it together, say, at eight o'clock in the morning. At that hour let us think of each other and then go alone by ourselves and give thanks to God for His love and goodness to us.

THE SWIFTEST THING IN THE BIBLE

CHILDREN, I suppose, are interested in the speed of things. No doubt you hold running races in your schools in order to see who is the swiftest runner. And perhaps you have often wondered to yourselves as to just how fast the birds go as they fly through the air.

Just the other day I read of a wind storm out in the State of Minnesota during which the wind blew at the rate of one hundred and two miles an hour, which is the highest velocity that the United States Government has of any wind. If it blew as hard as that here we should all have to stay home from church for fear we should be blown away.

I also have read of a railway train that went at the rate of one hundred and twenty miles an hour. This speed was made on a five mile run from a place called Fleming to Jacksonville in March, 1901. It was going at the

rate of two miles a minute, and that is travelling pretty fast, isn't it?

Yet it isn't near as fast as some other things. This big and heavy world of ours, for instance, and you would discover that it is a big world if you ever travelled over it very much, while if you saw the massive mountains of rock and dirt you would know that it is a heavy world too — this big and heavy world of ours in its journey around the sun goes at the marvellous rate of $18\frac{1}{2}$ miles a second. Just think of it! It would take only about two seconds for the world to go from this village to the City of New York, while our slow trains take an hour or an hour and a half. Yet this isn't fast.

A ray of light travels at the rate of 186,320 miles per second. The sun is 93,000,000 miles from this earth and it takes about eight minutes for the light to get from the sun to this world. So, you see, when we see the sun rise in the morning, it really has already been up eight minutes, for it has taken the light of the sun that time to come to us to tell us that the sun is up.

But electricity is even faster than light. That travels at the rate of 288,000 miles a second. Since the moon is only about 240,000 miles away from the earth it would only take electricity about one second to travel all of that distance. This is probably about as fast as anything with which we have to do except something that is mentioned in the Bible.

In the sixty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, in the twenty-fourth verse, there are these words: "Before they call I will answer." That is, God's answer to prayer is the swiftest thing of all. The faintest desire in our hearts God sees even before it becomes a petition on our lips. Our prayers are foreseen and answered before we utter them. God's love is behind this quick answer to our prayers and this ought to encourage us in our prayers. God is eager to hear us pray and answers us even before we call. Only love could travel as fast as that.

THE PUCKERY PEAR TREES

WHEN your pastor was a little boy he lived at one time on a place where all in a row stood five or six fine looking pear trees. Indeed, in the Autumn time the ground underneath them would be covered with yellow pears — but they were puckery pears.

Oftentimes, it seems as if that is just the way with mother nature that the tree which produces a fruit that isn't worth very much produces it in great quantity. I know of an apple tree which bears a little tough apple, which even a boy could hardly get his teeth into and which even the best of cooks could hardly use for cooking purposes and yet this tree bears those apples by the hundreds. I suspect that good mother nature would warn us that if we aren't very careful we too may produce a great quantity of fruit in the form of words and thoughts and deeds, which fruit, however, will not be worth very much to the world.

Well, these puckery pear trees grew beside a fence on the outside of which was a walk along which many people used to go. And sometimes we would see a stranger coming along and when he would catch a sight of all of those little yellow pears upon the ground perhaps he would stoop down and fill his pockets with them. After his pockets were filled then he would probably bite into one and immediately out of his pockets came all of those pears which he had been so eager to gather. Most people didn't like to eat those puckery pears.

But there was one tree of which we boys thought a great deal. The reason for this was that many years before some wise man had come along with a little twig of a Bartlett pear tree and had grafted it upon a branch of this particular puckery pear tree. And the sap of the puckery pear tree had run up into this little twig and had given it life so that it grew. After a while, when this new branch became large enough, it began to bear fruit. But it didn't bear any of these little puckery pears at all, but, on the other hand, it kept true to its

nature and bore a sweet and delicious Bartlett pear. We thought that the whole value of that puckery pear tree depended upon this new branch.

I think, boys and girls, that people are like those puckery pear trees — they aren't worth very much and the fruit they bear for the world isn't worth very much until a new branch is grafted on.

You boys and girls have a tree of character. And Jesus is the great and wise Care-taker of these trees and, if we will let Him, He will come and graft onto our trees new branches. And these branches will bear the most wonderful fruit in the world provided we nourish them and feed them with the sap of our life.

Jesus will come with a little branch of love and graft this upon the tree of your character, and, if this is nourished, it soon will grow and bear the fruit of kindness to all of those about you, or perhaps He will graft onto your tree a little twig of joy whose fruit will be good cheer; or a twig of courtesy whose fruit will be

politeness; or a branch of good nature whose fruit will be peaceableness.

And I think that all the while you are coming here to church Jesus is doing just this and you are trying to help Him by feeding these new branches with the sap of your life.

“JESUS THE SAVIOUR OF MEN”

TO-DAY is a Communion Sunday, upon which we older Christians come together particularly to remember something. Indeed, one of the reasons why we keep the Lord's Supper is because Jesus said “This do in remembrance of me.” And I should like it to be a Remembrance Sunday for you children too. But what, especially, should you remember at this time?

Have you noticed, boys and girls, that there are three letters just in front of you on our baptismal font? I suppose that you can see them from where you are—they read I. H. S.—but I wonder if you know what they stand for. You will see them somewhere in most of our Christian Churches. If I tell you what they mean then, with them always before you, you can have a remembrance Sunday every week.

Well, these letters are the first ones of three

different Latin words. The I is the first letter of the word Jesus; the H is the first letter of a word meaning “of men”; and the S is the first letter of a word meaning Saviour. The result of all this is that we have from these three letters the following: “Jesus the Saviour of Men.”

This truth is the greatest for you to know and you will do well to remember it. Sometimes, no doubt, you have had little troubles and dangers and evils in your lives and then, needing a helper, you would probably go to mother. But sometimes these troubles and evils are in our hearts — indeed, the heart may become desperately wicked, and then we have in Jesus a Helper or Saviour where mother can't help us at all.

So precious is this truth that I have read of a Christian Missionary who laboured for four years to find the word “Saviour” in the unwritten language of a tribe of people in the heart of Africa. And during that time he was stricken thirty times with the fever, was three times attacked by lions and several times by

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rhinoceroses, a number of times was ambushed by the natives, and for fourteen months never saw a piece of bread, during which time he ate everything from ants to rhinoceroses. He also says, however, that his joy was so great from bringing that word Saviour to a people in darkness that he would gladly go through all of his suffering again to do that same thing.

On this Remembrance Day let us keep in mind this one great truth that "Jesus is the Saviour of Men."

TURNING THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN

ACCORDING to the Book of the Acts (17:6) the Apostle Paul and his companions on one occasion were thought to have been doing some very strange things, for it is recorded of them that in Thessalonica the people charged them with having "turned the world upside down." This must have been a serious matter when you remember that in those days the world was thought to have been flat. Consequently, turning it upside down would have been thought to produce the same results to the people and everything else on the world as our turning of a pan of potatoes upside down — everything would fall out of the pan.

But ever since that time the world has also had its "upside" and its "downside" and, indeed, it even has the same to-day. When it comes to such matters as sin or righteousness

or God and truth the world isn't round and smooth all over. It is flat, and, in some places, the "upside" is down and the "downside" is up. And this same kind of people, as the missionary Paul with the Gospel of Christ, is alone trying to get the world's upside up and its downside down.

One of those Christian Missionaries, who was also trying to turn the world right side up, was Dr. John G. Paton, who tells in his Autobiography that once in the Island of Aniwa, where he laboured for many years among a savage and heathen people, there had been no rain. So he resolved to dig a well in order to get water to drink. But the people had never seen such a thing as a well and so didn't know that water could be gotten from the ground. Consequently, when he told them his plans to go down into the earth for rain they thought that he had "gone wrong in his head."

"What," they said, "are there clouds under the earth? Will the showers come up from below? No, Missi," they continued, "you will never see rain coming up from the

earth. We expect you will drop through your hole into the sea and the sharks will eat you." But Dr. Paton laboured on until at last he found good fresh water, having succeeded, you see, in turning a people's world upside down by bringing rain from clouds in the ground.

But on the next Sunday the Chief of the tribe, with a tomahawk in his hand, preached a sermon for Dr. Paton declaring that "from this day we must believe all that Missi tells us concerning 'Jehovah God.'" Then the multitude brought their idols and destroyed them, and again a world was turned upside down. Instead of worshipping stones they now knew of the same Father-God who is also our God.

GETTING A NEW NAME

IN the early days of history upon this world a name was usually given not so much because of its sound as because of its meaning. So, in the Old Testament, if we were to call the people whose names are there by what their names mean we would get some results like these: Mr. Father-of-a-Multitude for Abraham; Mr. Laughter for Isaac; Mr. Supplanter for Jacob; and Mr. Drawn-out-of-the-water for Moses.

These names sound somewhat like the names of the American Indians, don't they? Did you ever hear of such names as Two Crows, Rain in the Face, Laughing-water, White Wolf, Creeping Bear? I am sure you all know Indian names like those.

So, also, in England a couple of hundred of years ago, there were such peculiar names used. For example, one might meet with a Mr. Strong-in-the-Lord-and-in-the-power-

of-His-might Puddicombe, or a Mr. Behold-I-come-quickly Harrison. These names were used by the Puritans.

What does your name mean? If it is Peter it means a "rock"; if it is Catherine it means "pure"; if it is Barnabas it means the "son of consolation"; while if it is Irene it means "peace."

In the Book of Genesis (32:28) there is told how Jacob got a new name. While he was alone beside the ford of Jabbok, it says, "There wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." And before this angel went away he gave Jacob the new name of "Israel," because he had striven with God and with men and had prevailed. He got his new name from God because he won the victory.

In the Book of Revelation (3:12) there is a promise of a new name from God in these words: "I will write upon him my new name." But here too the one who will get this new name is "Him that overcometh." We have to win it. God will give us that name according to what we deserve. Like the new name given to

Jacob this name too will be determined by the particular thing for which our character stands. If we were to do that in this world what strange results ye should get. Some boys would be known as "Slothful" Jones, or "Cowardly" Brown, or "Selfish" Johnson or "Lazy" Smith. Some girls would be known as "Vanity" Jackson, or "Gossiping" Green, or "Light Minded" Halifax, and so on, and so on.

If these were to get a new name, and they would get this only by overcoming, then they might be known by such words as these: Charity, Prudence, Mercy, Truthful, Honest, Great-Heart.

I think some of us will feel ashamed in the next world unless we do get new names. If our Character will be revealed at that time by our name I am sure that ye should all like to have real Christian ones. Then let us remember that to the one who overcomes it is promised "I will write upon him my new name."

“NEVER-SLIPS”

IN the City of New Brunswick, New Jersey, there is a factory building on the top of which is a large electric light sign. Doubtless, you children have seen such signs advertising the goods that may be manufactured there. At night this sign is lighted and shows a horse's head made out of white electric lights with a bridle of coloured lights, all of which is inside of a huge horse shoe. Then underneath it all are the words “Never-Slip.”

When the ice is on the ground the blacksmith puts these “never-slips” on the horse's feet to prevent him from falling and to make walking easier for him. Last week during our ice storm we ought to have had something like that on our shoes.

But, boys and girls, there are some places that are always slippery and most people fall unless they wear some kind of “never-slips.”

In the seventy-third psalm the Psalmist says: "But as for me my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped." And where do you suppose those slippery places were.

One was the place of envy (v. 3.) Did you ever see a boy envious of another? Perhaps this boy had attained to some success which the other boy had failed to get and the place became slippery to this envious boy. Like the Psalmist what he needed is some kind of a never-slip for that place. I think he ought to put on his heart the never-slip of generosity. That will save anybody from falling in the place of envy everytime, even though such a place is slippery.

Another slippery place was that of doubt (v. 13). The Psalmist began to doubt whether it paid to live a good life. Indeed, a man will probably fall and seriously hurt himself if he ever gets into such a place. He surely needs a "never-slip." For such a slippery place he ought to put on his heart that never-slip of trust in God. No one ever falls who walks thus.

What the world needs is to have its heart shod with the “ never-slips ” of God. What is the use of falling down and hurting oneself and then getting up again lame and sore? Isn't it better never to fall down? The Prodigal Son didn't wear the never-slips of God and he fell down and hurt himself terribly. The Christian Church wants every boy and girl so prepared that they never will fall. For this wear the never-slips of God, such as honesty, gentleness, courage, purity, and love. These are what Jesus wore and He never slipped.

THE LAMP OF THE WICKED

THE world is full of lamps. The heavens have a lamp to shine by day and other lamps to shine by night. Our houses, our churches, and even our streets are being lighted every night by lamps.

But the Bible teaches us that character too has a lamp, whether that character is good or bad. And the light of this lamp shines through our faces so that men looking into them are able to discover something about our hearts. Out of the abundance of the heart, not only the mouth, but the whole face speaketh.

In the fourth verse of the twenty-first Chapter of Proverbs there is something told us about what the Bible calls "the Lamp of the Wicked." And what do you boys and girls suppose is the lamp of a wicked man's character?

Perhaps some of you boys might think that the wicked ought not to need any lamp for,

being "children of the darkness," they ought to be accustomed to the night. The other animals that go prowling around in the night never need a light for them to get into mischief. One doesn't have to tie a lantern about the neck of Mr. Tom Cat when he goes out into the dark. Indeed, this child of the night will find anything he is looking for — even if it is a fight, in the darkest of nights. But not so with wicked people.

The burglar has a dark lantern which, however, doesn't give him enough light, for he usually stumbles and falls and gets caught and then gets sent off to prison. And so the wicked man has a lamp of character — and what do you suppose it is? "A high look and a proud heart," says the Wise Man. That is, boys and girls, the lamp of the wicked is a "high look" on one's face, which look shines up from a proud heart, telling the world that this man is haughty and arrogant and overbearing and conceited, esteeming himself better than others. That is an awful lamp, is it not?

And what do you suppose God thinks of it?

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He says it is sin. "Him that hath a high look and a proud heart will I not suffer" (Ps. 101 :5).

Boys and girls, remember that your face is the lamp of your character and when you grow older don't ever cultivate the "high look" or the "proud heart" for that is "the lamp of the wicked."

“DON'T BLOCK THE GANGWAY”

NOT very long ago it was my good fortune to be able to go down to New York to take a steamship for a voyage on the ocean. And when I got there it was almost time for the ship to sail and I found a large crowd of people on the pier bidding good-bye to their friends and wishing them a safe and pleasant voyage.

Now leading over from the dock to the great ship there was a gang plank, or narrow passageway, by which one could get on board. At the entrance to that passage way there were two officers of the ship. And because of the crowd which would be in the way of any one wanting to pass by, every little while these officers would cry out “Don't block the gangway, please; don't block the gangway.” They didn't want the crowd to get into other people's way.

I think that is just what Jesus desired when He told us not to be stumbling blocks or in any

way to cause others to offend. Indeed, He even said that if you purposely block up a boy's or girl's way to the pure and good and true you might better hang a millstone around your neck and be cast into the midst of the sea. You children are trying to make good characters and beautiful souls and we are to take good care not to hinder you or block the gangway.

Just yesterday I received a letter from a mother whose boy is in a boarding school and in this letter the mother quotes the boy as saying of another boy in that school that "He seems to question everything I say and tries to 'queer' my recitations." You see instead of being a helper he is a hinderer. He is trying to block the other boy's gangway.

Did you ever see an automobile stuck in the mud? When the driver turns on the power the wheels buzz and go around and the car slips and slides but it doesn't get anywhere. Its way is blocked by a little slippery mud. I think that some people are to others as that mud to the auto. They make others slip and slide and hinder their passage and yet they don't get any

profit out of it either. In fact, that kind of conduct only makes big holes in their characters, as the auto does in the mud. Don't be slippery mud to the boy next to you. Give him every opportunity possible. Don't spoil his chances. Don't block the gangway.

GUARDING THE WEAK SPOT

THERE is an ancient story that Achilles, the great warrior among the early Greeks, was taken by his mother, who was a goddess, while he was yet a little boy, to be dipped in the river Styx. This dipping the Goddess knew would make the one so dipped forever safe from being wounded or hurt in the wars. Of course this must have increased the bravery of Achilles for surely any one can be brave when he knows that he can't be hurt.

But when she dipped him his mother held him by the heel, so the story goes, and this one spot never got into the sacred river. Consequently, here was a weak spot by which Achilles could be wounded. And this caused his death, for one day while he was fighting in battle an arrow struck him in that heel and as a result of this he died.

In the Bible also we have such a story for

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David, the little shepherd boy of Israel, sees one weak spot in the armour of the giant Goliath and he aims his stone in the sling at that one spot, and the stone, striking the giant in his forehead, causes his death.

Sometimes, I see a boy or girl clothed with the armour of God, the pieces of which were gotten in the home from mother or father or in the Sunday School or Church, and yet I may also see a weak spot in that armour. Perhaps it is the weakness of bad temper or disobedience or sulkiness or something else of the nature of these and the evil one aims his dart at that one weak spot in the armour of the boy's or girl's character and somebody gets wounded.

The rich young man who came to Jesus had such a weakness and Jesus, telling him that there was one thing lacking to his character (Mk. 10:21) refused to accept him as a disciple unless he would promise to protect himself from that weakness. The Lord knew that he would probably get wounded and slain out in the battles of the world just through that one weakness.

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Boys and girls, guard your weak spot. Don't think that just one weakness is a trifle and you need not worry about that. It is a danger spot — guard it.

THE SONG OF THE SIRENS

DID you boys and girls ever hear of the Sirens and their wonderful songs? I suppose you have heard a siren whistle, which is a whistle with a peculiar musical tone to it, and yet that song of the whistle is not very enticing oftentimes while the song of the Sirens was very much so.

The ancient story is that the Sirens were sea nymphs, half woman and half bird, and lived upon an island where they sang these infatuating songs in order to entice those that passed by that they might destroy them. I suppose they sang just as the evil temptations do to our hearts sometimes.

But there was one man who heard the songs of the Sirens and yet who got safely past their dangerous island. His name was Ulysses and the way he did it was this. First he had himself tied to the mast of his ship so that he

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couldn't possibly get loose and then he had the ears of all the sailors on board filled with wax so that they couldn't hear. When they came to the island the Sirens came out to sing as usual and though Ulysses on hearing their music struggled hard to get free yet the whole company got by safely.

At another time the Argonauts sailed past this dangerous place also in safety. These accomplished this by taking along with them the marvellous Orpheus who played for them such music that was so much sweeter than the Sirens' song was enticing that nobody listened at all to the music of temptation. This was the better way of passing this dangerous place, for Ulysses' ropes might have broken or the wax might have come out of the ears of the sailors.

This latter way is that by which the Apostle Paul tells us to sail past our evil temptations. In the Epistle to the Romans (12:21) he tells us to "overcome evil with good." We may tie ourselves to good resolutions and yet, sometimes, they get broken, or we may refuse to

listen to evil and yet, sometimes, the wax falls out, but if we have Jesus with us His love will sing sweeter than any of the evil temptations and we shall always be safe.

THE HOUSE THAT GOD BUILT

YOU are all familiar, no doubt, with the house that Jack built, now let me tell you of the house that God built. Perhaps you will be able to guess something if, first of all, I tell you that God built this house, not out of stone or wood, but out of flesh and blood. In many other respects, however, God's house is like ours.

On the outside of this building there are windows, through which people look out upon the world, but, strange to say, no one can look in from the outside. There is also a door, but this opens up and down rather than from side to side and it never has a lock upon it, though sometimes we think it ought to have the same. There also are two shutters which are never closed and yet curious people wish for a dozen or more on their houses. Sometimes, particularly in Winter, this house is painted red, though most often it is white.

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As to the inside of the house, God built here a number of rooms. First of all He made a kitchen where food is received and prepared for the dining room, which room also is to be found in this house. Then He built a library in which men might do their thinking and reading. Last of all God built a parlour, where guests are received and entertained. And we all think that this last mentioned room is the most important because the great object of a house is to have some one live in it, and particularly for this house because God also provided a most excellent guest to dwell in it. This guest was once born in a manger but His desire is to be born in our hearts.

But in what room of this house do you suppose people receive this wonderful guest? Well, some receive Him in the kitchen — but these are mouth-Christians. [They are great talkers but their religion usually ends in an excuse. Others receive Him in the dining room — but these are stomach-Christians. They come in crowds when the church feeds them with cake and ice cream. Others receive this

guest in the library and these we call think-Christians. They apply their thinking powers to their religion to the benefit of all concerned. Then finally, there are those who receive this guest in the parlour and these we call heart-Christians. They love God and men and women and children. And this is why God has built this house — that even boys and girls might receive Jesus into their hearts and learn to love Him.

THE INSIDE OF THE CUP

DID you ever wash dishes? If you did I suppose that you were told that the most important thing, next to not breaking any, was to get them clean. And this is especially true of the inside of them. If one doesn't clean that part of a cup or dish he is a poor dish-washer to be sure. It is this side that will come into touch with the clean food when we use those dishes.

In the Gospel of Matt. (23: 26) Jesus tells the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law in Jerusalem that they are not good cleaners of their cups and plates, for they only washed the outside of them, while the inside was full of uncleanness. And these Pharisees were doing this purposely, which, of course, made the situation all the worse. They just planned how they could make a cup appear clean from the outside and at the same time remain filthy within. Jesus condemned that.

But the "cups" in this story are nothing less than the very lives of these people. So that what Jesus was really finding fault with was the way these Pharisees were pretending and even looking as if they were clean while at heart they were full of greed and sinfulness. They had clean hands but impure hearts. They washed only the outside of the cup.

But Jesus told them that if first they should clean the inside of their lives then the outside would become clean as well. If they would take away the bad thoughts then they would stop saying bad words. If they would cease wishing that they had the things that belong to some one else they wouldn't be apt to take any of those things. If they would wash away all hate they would be free from all fightings. A cleansed heart would produce becoming conduct as well as be beautiful in itself.

It is a good thing for your pastor to see you here in Church on Sunday mornings all clean and bright and nicely dressed. Sometimes during the week he sees that the outside of the cup needs washing; but then one can't

expect a boy to have clean hands and run his father's farm or repair his father's broken machinery. But when Sunday morning comes everything is clean — inside and outside.

This makes him feel more like putting something into the cups. If a cup isn't clean we don't like to put anything into it, do we? And it is pretty hard to put anything into lives that aren't clean. But just to see boys and girls whose hearts are pure and whose wishes and desires are noble is a help. Clean lives like clean cups inspire us in our work.

But particularly let us remember that the chief thing is the inside of our life, that is, our thoughts and the desires of our hearts. First of all we must keep these clean. Then we won't have to go through life pretending we are clean when we are not. We will be just what we appear to be. We won't be hypocrites, like the Pharisees, we will be sincere and true. And, instead of condemning, Jesus will praise us.

“PAY AS YOU ENTER”

ONE day during this past week it was my pleasure to have a sleigh ride in one of those peculiar sleighs that are made by putting the box top of a wagon upon runners. It made a good comfortable sleigh and if any one were to get up a sleighing party it would be just the thing to use.

During our ride we overtook a neighbour who was going in our direction and he called out to us and asked if we had any room for him in our “trolley car,” as he called it. Of course the driver stopped his horses and the man jumped in. But when he got into the sleigh the owner turned around and said to him, “You know, of course, that this is a pay-as-you-enter car!” And that made me think of the great number of such cars in the world about which we might never know unless they were particularly brought to our attention.

For example, there is the trolley car of knowledge. That is a pay-as-you-enter car. Only the old men and women are wise, but to become so they had to give the first and best years of their lives to the obtaining of it. They had to pay a price at the very beginning of their journey. Those hours of study, that searching for information, the many books read, the patient work of the school room are some of that pay which had to be given even at the entrance to the car of knowledge.

So is it in regard to Christian discipleship. To become disciples of our Lord Christ we have got to pay immediately the devotion of our hearts. Jesus declared that he that would be His disciple must straightway deny himself, take up his cross and follow Him. We have got to pay here too when we begin.

The rich young ruler wanted to ride in the car of Christian discipleship but our Lord told him that first he must pay the fare. But, as you know, this young man refused to pay and he probably never became a disciple.

This is a rule of life. We must give in

order to get. We must pay the fare in order to ride. We can't run up bills intending to pay some future time but have got to pay at the very start. And I think that this is a fine rule to make our own. Expect to pay as you go. Remember that everything worth while has a price. Seek it but in your seeking pay as you enter.

GETTING READY FOR CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS is only a few days away — are you getting ready for it? I suspect that mother and father are doing so, for how should we ever have a proper Christmas if they didn't think about it and get ready for it?

The Bible tells us how God made His wonderful preparation for the first Christmas day. First, He sent His prophets to tell the world to get ready and to show the world how to get ready; and then He sent John the Baptist "to prepare the way of the Lord," that is, to get everything ready for Christmas. And even then the world wasn't prepared, for when Christ was born there was no place for Him to be born in except a stable. The story of His birth says that Mary "Wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn" (Lu. 2:3). After all of God's effort preparing for

this first Christmas, yet the world wasn't ready! So, I wonder, are you getting ready for this Christmas?

Perhaps some of you will say, "Oh, yes, we are ready, we have already written letters to Santa Claus and have put them on the fire place where he will easily find them, and then on Christmas eve we intend to hang up our stockings so he will fill them." But this is getting ready for Santa Claus, not for Christmas.

God, as well as Santa Claus, has also a present for every boy and girl, and the best way to get ready for Christmas is to get ready to receive this gift from God. But this present is given to the heart, so we shall have to prepare that for this Christmas. We all know what a great blessing to the world has been God's gift of Jesus on the first Christmas day in Bethlehem. Well, it is this same present of Jesus that God would give at this Christmas time to our hearts.

Consequently, the way to get ready for Christmas is to prepare our hearts so that He will grow up within us, making us beautiful in

character and useful in service. Let this be our prayer of preparation for this Christmas:

“O holy child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in,—
Be born in us to-day!”

SPEAKING WITH OUR FEET

IN the Book of Proverbs (6: 13) the Wise Man says of one that "he speaketh with his feet." This is a peculiar text, isn't it? Yet it is not only true of that man of old, it is true to-day. You boys and girls too speak with your feet.

But this is only one of several ways of speaking. Some can talk with their hands by using the sign language. In this way the deaf and dumb speak. The Indians in the West too use a sign language and whenever we send missionaries to them one of the first things they must do is to learn this language. Perhaps some of you children know how to make letters with your fingers too.

Then there is a lip language by which deaf people may know what is being said just by watching the movements of the talker's lips. They know what words will make this or that particular motion of the lips.

In addition, there is a language of the eyes. Often a look tells us more than what has been said. So with our actions. As Emerson says, these speak so loud that we can't hear what is otherwise said.

Just so is it with our feet. The sluggard shuffles his along; the soldier has a firm step; the thief is sneaky; the drunkard stumbles; while the man "That walketh uprightly walketh surely." We can tell a man's character by his walk. Thus his feet speaketh.

I have read of the South Sea Islanders that they are very proud if they can get hold of a pair of European shoes. They are especially gratified if they acquire a pair that squeak, or, as they call them, "shoes that talk." A story is told of one South Sea Islander that he came into Church with his shoes merrily a squeak, walked proudly to the front, and, removing the shoes, dropped them out of the window, so that his wife might also have the pleasure of coming in with "talking" shoes.

And, indeed, these shoes did talk — but not only by the "squeak." We know something

concerning the character of these people because of their "talking" shoes.

Well, boys and girls, if it is true that we speak with our feet, let us make them speak for Jesus. I think you are doing just this when you make them bring you here to Church every Sunday, and to Sunday School too. And they speak for Jesus when you use them to go on mother's errands and to do the things with them that you ought to do. I think it ought to be said of every Christian boy or girl not only that "he speaketh with his feet," but also that the message that he speaks is a message for Jesus.

THE LAST THE BEST OF ALL

DID you children ever hear the beautiful leaves speaking to one another? Or did you ever hear them say something to you? Of course to hear the leaves talk you would have to listen both with the outward and with the inward ears.

Well, last week, after a day's work was about done I went down to our beautiful river and took a little canoe trip all alone by myself. You know that these October afternoons on the water are greatly to be prized.

The sun was still shining brightly, while the river was calm, and all the beautiful leaves with their many colours and with their shadows in the water made me think that if ever I was going to see the fairies I ought to see them on that afternoon.

When I got down the stream a short distance at a place where the branches of the trees reached over the river and formed an arch and

all was very still I stopped paddling and just left the little boat go drifting. And while I sat very quietly I thought I heard with the ears of my soul those beautiful leaves speaking to me. And what I thought I heard them say was somewhat as follows:

“Please, sir, you are the Pastor of that Church over yonder whose white spire towers above the leaves on the neighbouring trees, aren’t you?”

And I replied, “Yes, indeed, I am the Pastor of that Church.”

Then the leaves said, “And don’t you speak to your boys and girls every Sunday morning in your Church Service?”

And when I replied that “I did” then they all seemed to cry out, “Tell them about us, won’t you?”

And I said: “But I preach sermons to those boys and girls and I wish that you could come and see them, how quietly they sit and how respectfully they listen when I am talking to them.”

“We should like very much to see your

boys and girls," they replied, "but of course you know that ye can't get away, and, if we should leave our branches we would soon die. But tell them about us anyway, won't you?"

The leaves seemed to be so urgent that I had to submit and I asked them what I should tell you children about these beautiful leaves. Then, out there in the quiet, while we were all alone, they told me to tell you the following:

"You remember, perhaps, that we were born about six or seven months ago; and when we came into the world we were only little baby buds — just little tots, like some of your boys and girls. But people thought we were pretty, and when the rain and sun came upon us we began to open and to show our light green dress to the world. Then everybody thought we were prettier than ever, but we grew larger and soon were able to give men and women a welcome shade from the rays of the hot sun. And so we lived all the Summer. But now we are coming to the end of our life; soon we shall have to leave our branches and fall to the ground and die. But we have decided to fill

our veins with all of these beautiful colours that you see — the reds and greens and yellows — so that we shall be prettiest of all at the end of our life."

Then I said: "So you want me to tell them this sermon of the dying leaf — to be prettiest and best at the end?"

And I remembered the Bible text: "But last of all He sent unto them his son." God's last was God's best.

“TAKE-IT-BACK-DAY.”

I HAVE read of a certain Western town that once a year celebrates what is called a “Take-it-back-Day.” It seems that on that particular day the things that have been borrowed from the neighbours are taken back to their rightful owners. And just imagine the strange things that would happen at such a time as that. Just imagine those books and umbrellas, that cup of sugar or flour, those axes and rakes, the five or ten dollar bills, and, indeed, a thousand other different things that I might mention all coming back home! What a rejoicing there would be at the sight of those many articles once again!

But it would be better still if there were such a day for other things too. Sometimes we take things away from others by slander or gossip or careless talk, and wouldn't it be fine to take back all those things! Such things, I mean, as our neighbour's good name or patience or gen-

teness, which we may have taken from him. How he would rejoice to see all these things coming back home again, which things have been taken from his character.

The story is told of the great Dr. Samuel Johnson, who wrote the first important English dictionary, how he one time kept such a Take-it-back-day. It seems that when he was a boy his father, who was sick, bade him to do something which he very much disliked to do and which, consequently, he refused to do. But this disobedience weighed upon his conscience until just fifty years later he returned to his old home town and stood with uncovered head in the public market place for an hour, although it was storming at the time, in order to take back then the obedience which he refused to his father when a boy. And that was a manly thing to do, wasn't it?

But I think it would also be fitting to keep such a day upon which we might take back to God the things that we have borrowed from Him. We might return the pure thoughts, the good deeds, or the kindly feelings which we

may owe Him. Or perhaps we might even return our heart's love and devotion, which also are His due and which we may have been keeping from Him. The younger son did that when "he arose and came to his father," and the Father also rejoiced to get His son back again. Let us have a day when we shall take our whole lives back to God again.

ONE THING AT A TIME

A SHORT time ago I saw a strange thing. It was only a man cutting down a tree but he was doing it in a way I had never seen before. Instead of beginning at the bottom, near the ground, he began at the top. Did you ever see a man cut down a tree by beginning at the top of the tree? And instead of cutting the whole tree down at once he would climb up into the top of it and cut off one limb at a time, and then he would come down and cut that limb up and clear it out of the way.

This wood-cutter was an old man and I thought that his plan of taking one limb at a time was a pretty good way of doing things. He didn't want too much of a job on his hands at once so he followed the rule of one thing at a time. This is the way the birds build their nests in the Springtime. They bring one straw or twig at a time, until the whole is completed.

In the world there is a tree which the Christian Church is trying to cut down; it is the tree of the drink evil. And those people who are working for temperance by means of local option are also like the man cutting down the tree one limb at a time. They are hoping to get rid of this curse by cutting away one county or district at a time. It seems to be a slow way and yet after a while the tree gets cut down.

So, in the Scripture (Phil. 3: 13) the Apostle Paul says that he followed this rule too. "This one thing I do," he says. Paul was running a race for a prize and he means that as he ran that race he just concentrated his effort on that one thing. He put his whole attention on whatever he did.

Did you boys ever run races? Well, if you did you know that when you are going to run you must do that one thing of running; you can't stop in the middle of your race and eat your breakfast or do something else. If you did you certainly would never get the prize. Indeed, everybody would justly laugh at you. To get anywhere or to do anything successfully

we have to follow the rule, "One thing at a time."

To-day is a time when we have to be specialists, that is, we have to devote ourselves to one thing in order to become superior in it. I have seen people trying to do a half dozen different things all at once and the result was that nothing was done decently. It would have been better to have tried one thing at a time and to have done that well.

I think this is a good motto for boys and girls. What are you going to do when you become men and women? Well, don't choose a number of different things; choose one and stick at it until you can do it well. Follow Paul's rule, "This one thing I do."

THE MAKING OF GOD'S JEWELS

IN the Book of Malachi (3: 17) God is pictured as busy in the world making precious jewels, which, some day, He will gather up for Himself. I think that these jewels are the Lord's own special treasures and, like the other jewels of which we know, they too must be very beautiful. Indeed, God wishes everything beautiful. But they are not to be worn on the fingers of your sister's hands or around the neck of somebody else's sister, but God is to keep them for Himself.

Perhaps they will be something like the beautiful gems of the heavens that sparkle up above the world so high like diamonds in the sky. These are God's jewels too and yet He lets us look at them and enjoy them. He shows them to us, as in the Tower of London people are permitted to see the royal gems of England. These latter are valued at something like fifteen

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million dollars and thousands of people have visited the Tower just to see these treasures.

Or perhaps they are like the little drops of water on the blades of grass on a dewy morning, which look like beautiful pearls. Indeed, when the early sun shines upon these pearly dew drops what a beautiful world we have! I don't wonder that the little birds sing so beautiful in the early morning. They must think that when the world looks beautiful it ought also to sound beautiful.

But, are you wondering just what these jewels of the Lord are? Listen to this:

“Little children, little children,
Who love their Redeemer,
Are the jewels, precious jewels,
His loved and His own.”

Little boys and girls, as they are the jewels of the home and are worn on mother's heart so are they the precious jewels of God. Isn't it a fine thing to remember that even little children are very precious to God?

THE PEOPLE WITH BEAUTIFUL FEET

IN the great country of China there is a peculiar custom of cruelty to the little girls, which custom is that of foot-binding. The forward part of the foot is turned under the heel and bound fast, causing great pain to the little owners of the feet. The result of this is that for the first few years of childhood there is no hopping, or skipping, or jumping as in this country. On the other hand the little girls spend most of their time crying because of their suffering. Now, all this is done in order that the Chinese girl might have pretty feet, for it is thought that small feet are pretty feet.

In America how different all this is! Here we all wear comfortable shoes, and most of them are good looking shoes too. Indeed American shoes are sold in many different parts of the world to-day, because of these things.

We want good looking feet too but we think that a foot can be good looking and also comfortable. This is the difference between the Christian way and that of the heathen peoples.

But the Bible tells us something about God's view of beautiful feet. In the Epistle to the Romans (10: 15) we read "How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things." That is, the people who have the most beautiful feet of all are the missionaries of the Gospel.

And I think that there are millions of people to whom the missionaries go who must also think this way. I think that the people of Africa must think that David Livingstone, who used his feet to explore their dark continent and open it to the Christian Gospel, had the most beautiful feet in the world. So they must think of the thousands of other missionaries who have brought to them the "glad tidings of good things."

And in our home land also I think the rule holds that if you take to your playmate or neighbour some "glad tidings" they too will

think that you have beautiful feet. So, the way to have feet of worth is to use them to the good of others just as the missionary does. Jesus used His feet to go about doing good. Let this be our prayer:

“Keep my feet, that they may be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.”

HIDING FROM GOD

IN the Book of Genesis there is the peculiar statement that "Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden." Isn't it strange that any one should want to try to hide himself from our God, who is so good? It is just as if one of you children should want to hide yourself from your kind mother. Jesus taught us that God is a loving Father, kind and good, and we ought not to want to get away from Him.

But the explanation of this is that Adam and Eve had done something that was wrong and then, just like people to-day, they wanted to hide themselves. Jesus told us that there are people who don't like the light because their deeds are evil.

I have known boys and girls who have been afraid in the dark. Indeed, I have even heard

of some who pull the bed clothes up over their heads after the lights are put out because they are somewhat afraid. Often I pass by your houses at night and while I know that you children are fast asleep yet I see a light burning in your bedrooms. I suspect that mother puts that there so that if you awake at any time during the night you won't be frightened at the dark.

Well, it is just like that in the darkness of evil deeds. We get afraid and ashamed and want to hide ourselves. Conscience makes cowards of us all. The reason for wanting to hide, therefore, is just the same as in the case of Adam and Eve. We have done wrong.

But it is impossible to hide from God anyway, because He sees everywhere. Sometimes the ostrich, that animal with the long and powerful legs, by which he can run faster even than any of your young colts, puts his head into the sand and then thinks he is hiding away. But of course the rest of his body can plainly be seen.

But we can't hide from God even as well as

that, for we can't even hide our faces. God sees us all the time. "Thou hast set my sins in the light of Thy face." However, if we walk as children of the light and do the things that are true and good we won't want to hide from God, which is far better.

CLOUDS WITHOUT WATER

ISN'T this a strange thing to say of people — “Clouds without water”? It makes one think of those cloudy days which we sometimes have that are so provoking, when it is neither clear nor does it rain; when the sun is obscure and the day is gloomy and when the lamps must be lighted so much earlier than on other days. I am sure that we don't like very much that kind of a day. We would prefer that it would either rain or clear up and be done with it.

And yet the Bible says that there are some people in this world who are like these waterless clouds. No doubt these people look like other men and women; no doubt they have the same kind of hands and faces, talking and acting in the same way, and yet there must be something lacking to their characters. I suspect that some boys would like to use of them that little but expressive word “bluffers.” If so, I think they would be right.

But have you ever seen these waterless clouds in school, boys and girls? I have seen children who sit and look just like other boys and girls, except that they never study their lessons, and, consequently, when the quiz time comes it must make the teacher think that these children have brains, but still there is nothing in them — they must be “clouds without water.”

I know that our Christian Churches have that kind of people too, for almost all of our Church work is done by a very few people. I fear that the rest of the members must be the waterless clouds of our churches.

There is one man among our church officers whom I shouldn't like to be, and that is a Church treasurer. For sometimes, there are people who come to our churches who appear to be just like the rest of the congregation, and when the offering plates are passed they go through the same motions, putting their hands into their pockets and pulling something out, but, when they put it onto the plate, if I were a Church treasurer, I fear I should always be thinking this text — “Clouds without water.”

The Gospel tells us that while Jesus was going along the road one day He spied a fig tree and, being hungry, He went over to it to see if He could find some figs to eat, when, behold, it was barren! Jesus, thinking of the Jewish nation, declared that this tree would be destroyed, because it didn't bear any fruit. The next day the disciples observed that the barren fig tree had died. Even Jesus didn't seem to like trees without fruit, or, clouds without rain, did He?

Boys and girls, don't just pretend or merely have the appearance of being real boys and girls. Put a noble purpose in your heart and set before you a high ideal after which to strive and then strive for it with all your might so that, when the test comes, it will be found that there is nothing lacking to your characters, and so that nobody will ever be able to use of you boys and girls these reproachable words, "Clouds without water."

“SLIGHTLY SOILED, GREATLY
REDUCED IN PRICE”

My sermon this morning is about a piece of muslin. Before it was made this piece of muslin was only a few snowy-white cotton blossoms, living in the sunny fields of the South. But one day the white blossoms were picked and sent up North to be made into our piece of muslin. After this muslin was made it had to be sold, so it was sent to a large store where it lay upon the counter spotlessly clean and white.

Now it was just this whiteness and cleanliness which helped so much to give this piece of muslin its value. But while it was waiting to be sold, lying upon the counter, the dust would settle upon it, and, as a result, its pure whiteness began to disappear. At the same time its cleanliness also began to depart.

But worse than the dust was the constant handling it received from the many customers

who came to that store. Seeing this pretty white muslin lying upon the counter they would pick it up, feel of it, and unconsciously leave it a little bit more soiled. The result was that after a short while this muslin became too much soiled to sell and the owners of the store put this sign over its counter: “Slightly soiled, greatly reduced in Price.” Along with its whiteness and cleanliness its value too had decreased, and the owners were now willing to sell it at a greatly reduced price.

Boys and girls, your characters are just like that piece of white muslin — when they are spotless and clean they are of great value, but when they become soiled ever so slightly then they too are greatly reduced in price. Character’s value declines when its whiteness departs. Be clean and pure and true and your value will be above that of rubies. Whenever you may be tempted to do wrong remember that your whiteness of soul is everything. Therefore avoid evil companions, guard the *whiteness* of your souls and keep safely guarded the treasures of your pure life.

LITTLE SUNBEAMS

WE have just been listening to the Primary Class on this bright Children's Day as they were singing their true message that "We are little sunbeams." I think that is why mother and father like to have you little tots in your homes. And I know that that is one reason why we like to have you here in our Church, for even this Church would get gloomy without your bright faces and cheery spirits. God sends children into the world to be like the sun, to drive away the thunder showers from our homes and to burn away the clouds of gloom from our Churches.

What a wonderful ball of fire that is up in our sky which we call the sun and which gives to us both light and heat. It is about ninety million miles away, which is a long journey even for an automobile, isn't it? We couldn't go as far as that on our Sunday School picnic, could we? Yet that sun up in the heavens is

working twenty-four hours every day and it never takes a vacation and yet it never complains and it is doing all this just to send sunbeams down to our world.

I wonder if you ever have had your mothers read to you the story of the remarkable travels of Mr. Gulliver. The story goes that this man was one time on a ship that was wrecked and being wearied from his exertions in trying to save himself he lay down on the sand and fell fast asleep. When he awoke he discovered that he was tied fast to the ground so that he couldn't move even a finger. He noticed that something seemed to be walking over his body and when he looked down he saw a great number of tiny little men only six inches tall going all over his body. There were about forty of them on his chest. At that Mr. Gulliver just roared, at which they all fell off, some of them hurting themselves and breaking their collar bones by that big fall from the top of his chest to the ground.

Well, these little men didn't like that, so they got out their bows and arrows, which ar-

rows were only little bits of pins, and began to shoot them at poor Mr. Gulliver. Pretty soon, however, they arranged a peace and then the little fellows built a platform beside Mr. Gulliver's ear and they climbed up upon it and in a little squeaking voice they told him what the conditions of the peace were. Then Mr. Gulliver motioned to them that he was hungry and they fetched long ladders to his side and then brought scores of their little baskets full of food to him to eat, and he would take a whole basketful at one mouthful. Such were some of the strange experiences that Mr. Gulliver had on that voyage.

At another time he was shipwrecked again and on this occasion he found himself in a land of great giants. When the baby giants saw little Mr. Gulliver they wanted him for a plaything. One baby girl giant cried for him so much that suddenly her mother snatched up Mr. Gulliver and gave him to her to play with. The first thing she did was to put his head into her mouth, at which he yelled furiously, fearing lest she should bite his head off.

On one of his strange journeys he found a man who had thousands and thousands of cucumbers. This man claimed that there were sunbeams in those cucumbers and he was trying to get them out so that they could be used in the cold and rainy summers. He was trying to preserve sunbeams. He thought that they were so valuable that we ought to treasure them up for some other day. And, boys and girls, that is just what we think of a different kind of a sunbeam and that is what we are trying to do. Our Sunday School and our Church are both trying to preserve the sunbeams in you children. As you have been singing, now you are sunbeams, but by and by when you grow older we want you to be sunbeams then too. And we think that by your life with Jesus who is God's great Sunbeam to the world, and by your Christian training day by day, when you grow older you will still have the joy and sunshine in your lives just as you have the same to-day. The bright and happy people in the world are the true Christian people. The "sunbeams" are the ones who get their beams from Jesus.

“ IN THE BEGINNING GOD ”

I SUPPOSE that you boys and girls have thought of the time when the world didn't have any flying machines or automobiles for that was only a short time ago. And it may be that you have also thought of the time when the world didn't have any railway trains or steam boats, or any telephone or telegraph, or even when there were no churches or schools or houses. The time when people lived in caves in the rocks, or in huts as they do in Africa or in wigwams as the American Indians used to live right here in our own land.

But did you ever think of the time when the world didn't have any mountains or rivers, clouds or sky, trees or flowers or birds or cattle? When the world didn't have any boys and girls or men and women? In fact of the time before there was any "time." When there were no clocks and when God had not yet created the

day and night or even the sun by which to tell time.

Well, this time before there was any "time" must have been "In the beginning." The Bible says, in its very first verse, that God was there even in this "beginning." And then what happened next the little poem by George Macdonald will tell you:

"Where did you come from, baby dear?
Out of the everywhere into here.

Where did you get your eyes so blue?
Out of the sky as I came through.

Where did you get that little tear?
I found it waiting when I got here.

Where did you get that pearly ear?
God spoke, and it came out to hear.

How did they all just come to be you?
God thought about me and so I grew."

"In the beginning"—before the mountains were brought forth or ever the earth and the world had been formed—"God"! What a Great and Wonderful God is our God!

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How reverent we should be of His name! How filled with awe should we feel at His presence! From everlasting to everlasting He is God. Yet it is true that each one of us can say of our God that "God thought about me and so I grew." Indeed, if it had not been for God we should not have been here at all. It is He that hath made us and not we ourselves.

But just as God was before all things and has "thought about us" so He ought to be before all things in our lives. Wouldn't it be fine if we could say of all of our thoughts or desires "In the beginning God." [That is, that we have the thought of God uppermost in our minds. Whenever we begin the day, in that very beginning we ought to think of and pray to our God. That just as in the beginning of our lives God thought about us, so in the beginning of any task or experience we should think about God. Isn't this a good rule for our lives as we commence them as children or as we begin a new day or a new task? "In the beginning God."

FOOLISH EXCUSES

ON one occasion Jesus told a story about some people who were wonderfully alike in one thing — they were as clever in making excuses as any modern boy or girl could possibly be. And, perhaps, when you hear about them you may think, “Yes, there is some likeness to them in the people whom I know in the world.”

Once there was a man who planned to give a great dinner to his friends in order that they might have a happy time together. And, although he had properly invited these people to come, yet when the time for the dinner drew near he even did something still more courteous — he sent his servant to tell them to come for now everything was ready. But, they all began to make excuses.

One man told this servant that he couldn't be present because he had just bought a field and he had to go and look at it. Another said

that he had bought five yoke of oxen and he had to go and test them. While still another asked to be excused because he had just been married.

Now, doubtless, all of these men knew that they ought to have gone to that feast and at least show their appreciation of their friend's kindness. They knew their duty but thought that they could escape a duty by making an excuse. Of course, no one ever does that. An excuse isn't worth very much when a man is face to face to a real duty that ought to be done.

If a boy has a daily duty of keeping the wood box filled he can't get away from that duty by saying that he had just received a new bicycle and he had to go and try it. He could have tested his bicycle after he had filled his wood box. Or if a girl has a daily duty of being to school on time in the morning she can't escape from that duty by saying that she had to eat her breakfast first, can she? No, you can't escape a duty by making an excuse.

And yet thousands of people are always trying to do this. Indeed, some people even try to get rid of their religious duties that way.

They don't go to Church or to Sunday School and then make foolish excuses to explain it. They think they will escape all blame that way. But instead of losing the blame what they really lose is the good that they would get at the Church or Sunday School; just as these people of the story lost the good things of the feast. That is a reason why excuses are foolish too. Some people even lose the kingdom of God that way.

Well, let us make a resolve to have nothing to do with foolish excuses. We know that by making them we can neither escape our duties nor fail to lose the good that comes from doing duty. Whatever task we are called upon to do let us do it and leave the excuses to the foolish people in the world.

GIVING JESUS A TRIUMPH

NO DOUBT you all have heard the story of Sir Walter Raleigh and his cloak; how he stood one day along the line of the approach of the great Queen Elizabeth of England when a "trifling accident" happened, as Sir Walter Scott calls it in his book *Kenilworth*.

The night had been rainy and just where Sir Walter stood a small quantity of mud interrupted the Queen's passage. As she hesitated to go on because of this mud Sir Walter threw his valuable coat from his shoulders and laid it on the miry spot so that the Queen might step upon that and pass safely over the mud. The great Queen was given a triumph, but it cost Sir Walter a cloak.

In the New Testament there is another story and I think it is more beautiful even than the one about Sir Walter. This is the story of the *Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem*, of

which it says '(Mt. 21:8)' that the most part of the multitude along the route spread their garments in the way. And there were children in that multitude too and, no doubt, they also gave their cloaks in order to give Jesus a triumph. As in the case of Sir Walter Raleigh it cost these people their garments to do this noble thing.

To-day the Christian Church is trying to give Jesus a triumph in this world. We want Him to ride into the affairs of this world so that He will rule over them. We want to make Him king. We want Him to reign instead of hate and greed and selfish ambition and such things which produce the wars and strifes and misery in this world.

But to-day, just as when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday, it costs to give Jesus a triumph. We have to spread our garments in the way. That is, we have to give of our possessions and of our time as also of our lives in order to get the misery and wretchedness out of the world and in order to get Jesus into it.

Your little Mission Band is helping to give Jesus a triumph in the world. Indeed, you are even spreading your garments in the way by sending clothing to the poor children who can't afford to own any. And by your prayers and by your work also you are helping to pay this great cost of making Jesus King.

Perhaps it would be a fine thing for each one of you children to have in your homes a little bank on which could be written, "Whatever is put into this bank is to help make Jesus King." Then whenever you might have any spare pennies you could put them to good service. Or perhaps sometimes you might feel like sacrificing something, as Sir Walter Raleigh sacrificed his cloak, and then you could use that bank too. In fact I think that it is by sacrifice alone that we shall give our Lord a triumphal entry into this world. Some Christians, like our missionaries, give their entire lives and they accomplish a great deal thus. Can't we give something, if not our lives, at least the price of a coat to help make Jesus king? Then, this would be a true Palm Sunday, would it not?

A LAMP FOR OUR FEET

IN the old City of Pompeii, which city was completely buried with ashes by an eruption of the volcano, Mt. Vesuvius, there have been found all kinds of interesting things. Bread, honey, rice, and, marvellous to say, even eggs are preserved from the ruins of nineteen hundred years.

There have also been found foot lamps which the people of Pompeii used to put on the toes of their shoes or sandals so that the light would shine upon their path and reveal anything over which one might stumble. Wouldn't it seem strange to-day to see people wearing lamps on their shoes?

But in the Book of Psalms (119:103) it says that God's Word is a lamp to our feet. That is, if we know the scripture well enough, in every danger or temptation, every question of right or wrong, some verse or truth will

shine upon our path and give us light so that we won't fall.

The Bible is our lamp; knowledge of the Bible is the oil of the lamp. Of course, no lamp will give light without oil in it, neither can we get light from God's Word for our dark places unless we put this truth in our hearts. This is one of the reasons for Bible study, for only so can God's Word become a lamp to our lives.

Did you ever get into a dark place? I mean a morally dark place where you didn't know just what to do in order to do the right thing. Then perhaps you may have said to yourself, "Now, I want to do the right thing but what is it?" Perhaps it was a question of honesty. And of course you all try to be honest but how do you know just what to say or do in order to be honest? Well, here is where the Bible helps us. It becomes a lamp for our feet and shows us how to go and what to do.

In heathen lands where they don't know about our Bible they don't have any lamp and consequently they live in darkness. All kinds

of things are done, which things we know are wrong, simply because the people don't know any better. They have no lamp to show them the way.

But in our land, where we have this great lamp, there is no excuse for wrong doing. If we don't know the difference between right and wrong then we ought to consult our lamp. What we need is more Bible study. The Bible will show us where and how to go, for it is a light to our path.

THE RING THAT PINCHED

I HAVE read of a young prince who owned a most wonderful ring. This ring was extraordinary not because of any beauty or worth in gold but rather because it fitted the prince's finger perfectly whenever he did what was right and good, but when he did anything that was wrong then it pinched and hurt him severely.

Perhaps you are thinking, Wouldn't it be fine if we too only had such a ring? If we had a ring to tell us when we are in danger of doing anything that is wrong, or to tell us if already any wrong has been done, then we too would have a great help in keeping away from the evil that is in the world.

Well, we have just such a ring. You can't see it with your eye, but you can feel it in your soul. It is not on the fingers of the hand, but it is on the five senses of our life. We call it conscience and, when it pinches, we say that conscience is speaking to us.

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This ring pinches, for example, if the eye should be looking where it ought not to be, or if the ear is listening to anything untrue, or if our tongue is using unbecoming language.

But sometimes the pinch is very faint and unless the soul is sensitive it won't feel any hurt whatsoever. So the needful thing is to keep the soul sensitive to the touch of this ring. How shall we do this? Simply by minding the touch every time we feel it. Then, even if it is faint at first, our souls become more and more easily influenced and the pinch of this ring becomes more and more severe.

I think Jesus has something to do with that touch of conscience, as we call it. Just listen to this verse of a hymn which you children sing in your services:

"I cannot feel Thee touch my hand,
With pressure light and mild,
To check me as my mother did,
When I was but a child:

But I have felt Thee in my thoughts,
Rebuking sin for me;
'And when my heart loves God, I know
The sweetness is from Thee."

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That is, after all, while conscience in our ring, yet Jesus is there in our very thoughts and feelings, telling us which are right and which are wrong. But He presses gently and we have to be very attentive or we may not feel His touch.

HOW TO SEE JESUS TO-DAY

NO DOUBT all of you children would have rejoiced to have lived at the time when Jesus did upon this earth. You would like to have seen Him. You sing:

“ I think, when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How He called little children as lambs to His fold,
I should like to have been with them then.”

And we read in the Gospel of John (20:20) that the disciples too were glad when they saw the Lord. And the world is glad too to see the Lord Jesus. Zaccheus climbed up a tree and thousands of others have fasted or gone on pilgrimages or kept watch hours or built churches or prayed in the deserts or on the mountain tops and done a great number of other things just for this same purpose.

But there is a better way of seeing Jesus than by doing those things. It is just by being

kind. Indeed, oftentimes all of these other things won't help us at all, or bring Jesus to our sight, whereas a little kindness to some one in need will reveal Jesus to our sight immediately, if we are looking for Him, and, therefore, if we do this kindness in His name.

When Jesus was upon earth He told of certain ones who didn't even know that they had seen Jesus. They had ministered to the poor and sick and hungry and naked and yet had not seen Him. Let us watch for Him and even go out of our way to see Him in the poor and distressed, both of our own land and of other lands. Let us be able to say, "Lord, we saw Thee in the poor of the whole world."

If we shall remember our Lord is present wherever there are "the miserales" then we shall always know where to find Him. Sometimes there may not be any of these unfortunate people living near us, but nevertheless the world is full of them and this will never be an excuse. We ought to be able to say to our Lord some day, "Lord, I saw Thee, not only in the naked and poor and hungry of my own village, but I

saw Thee in the thousands of India and China and Africa and I ministered unto Thee."

This is our better object for seeing our Lord, isn't it? That we might minister unto Him. We still ought to want to hear Him say to us, "Let the little Children come unto me," but we ought also to want to say to Him, "Lord, I saw Thee and ministered unto Thee." And then our Lord will tell us to be with Him, where we shall see Him forever. And all this will be true simply because we were kind to the unfortunates.

THE MORE CONVENIENT SEASONS

DID you ever hear of a boy who, when told to do something, would say he would do it, but, at the same time he would ask that he might do it at some future time? And the strange thing about it all was that that particular future time never came and the deed was never done. The future time was like the to-morrow which we never get to.

That was the case of a man mentioned in the Book of the Acts (24: 25) whose name was Felix. The Apostle Paul told him that he ought to become a Christian and he replied that he would do it at some "more convenient season." But the result of putting it off was that that future season never came and Felix never became a Christian. Just think of what he lost simply by not doing it right away!

Jesus also met that kind of a man; the kind who puts off to a more convenient season the

doing of something. On one occasion our Saviour called a man to discipleship and this man replied that he would become a disciple but, he said, "Let me first go and bury my father," which means "I will do it at some future time." And another such man replied that he would follow Jesus only he wanted to go home first and say good-bye to his family. It isn't likely that either of these two men ever really became disciples of our Lord simply because they put it off to some future time.

Here is a motto, which my room-mate in College used to have hanging on the wall and I think it is a good one. It is only the short and simple "Do it Now." To the boy or girl here who wants to become somebody in the world and who wants to do something worth while I commend this rule. Become a "Do-it-Now-Boy" or a "Do-it-Now-Girl." You will never find a better time than just now. The more convenient seasons never come. No one ever gets anywhere who is always putting things off to some future time.

And this is the only rule for doing our

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religious duties. The Bible says "Now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." And this means that the only time that is acceptable to God isn't some time in the misty future, it is "now," and "now" only. We can't trifle with God. We must attend to spiritual things directly. The thought of a more convenient season is only a temptation. Have nothing to do with it.

So, boys and girls, if you ever feel or think that you ought to do something that is good and helpful don't you say "Well, I'll do that some other time"—do it immediately.

WITH HEAD OR WITH HEELS

DID you ever see a boy or girl in school who was sent home for a book or something else which had been forgotten? Perhaps he had left his book home and had walked all the way to the school before he discovered that he had forgotten something; and then he would have to walk all the way home again in order to get it. The long walk home and back to school again came to him simply because he "hadn't thought." Because he didn't use his memory he had to use his feet. What he hadn't done with his head he had to do with his heels. And the world is full of just that kind of folks.

There are some who live and work with their brains, remembering things, and they are people of great worth. Then there are others who work only with their heels and who are always trying to catch up and get to the place where they ought to have been long ago.

Whenever people forget things, like the boy and his book, they must not only go back over the same old ground but they must also lose what has been going on while they have been going back home. They must spend their time either on the road toward home or in trying to catch up in what they missed. These are the "trying-to-catch-up" boys and girls.

The people of Israel were like that some times. In one of the Psalms (106: 21) it says of these people that "They forgot God their Saviour, who had done great things in Egypt." And it was because of this that they had to wander for forty years in the Wilderness until they found Him again. What they, too, hadn't done with their heads they had to do with their heels. It was like going home for the school books, wasn't it? And just think of all their troubles in that Wilderness during those forty years just because they had forgotten something!

In the New Testament Jesus tells about a sheep which also did this thing. That sheep wandered away from the fold and then forgot

how to get back again. And it nearly died out on the mountains wandering about trying to find that way back to the shepherd which had been forgotten.

The prodigal son also forgot something; he forgot his father's house and love. And when he was far away from this home he had to walk all the way back again. What he hadn't done with his heart as well as his head he had to do with his heels. And I think that both his feet and his heart were sore before he got back to his father.

It pays to remember things. It is worth a great deal if we train ourselves to use our memories rather than to waste our lives trying to find things. Above all things, it pays to remember God. And we want you children so trained in head and in heart that you will never lose your souls because you have forgotten God your Saviour.

THE CHANCE WORLD

DID you boys and girls ever hear of the Chance World? This is a world in which everything just happened by Chance. Nothing took place orderly and regularly as in our world. And because there were no governing laws in this world the results were startling.

For instance, perhaps the sun would rise in the morning and perhaps it wouldn't. If it did rise perhaps it wouldn't shine. Or it might rise some other time of the day,—perhaps in the afternoon or evening. Or the moon might come up instead. Nobody knew just what was going to happen, for everything went by chance.

Now just think of the time we would have in a world like that! You boys wouldn't know when to get up in the morning in such a topsy turvy land. If we were to appoint service for half past ten in the morning perhaps the sun wouldn't be up yet, and what a lot of late comers we would have! Or perhaps the sun would

just be setting and then what a chance for the sleepers in Church!

In this chance world, also, children might be born in any sort of shape or make-up. They might not have a head or they might be all head. But these heads might not be on the shoulders, they might be on the feet. Or, perhaps, they wouldn't have any feet. Any way, no one could tell just how people would be born.

So, also, there was no certainty in regard to anything else. If one were to jump up into the air you couldn't tell whether he would ever get down again. One day he might be so light that he couldn't descend from a chair to the floor. The next day, however, he might be so heavy he would go right through the whole earth.

But isn't it a grand thing that we don't live in any such world as that? In our world everything is orderly, and according to law. And God is the great Ruler who keeps everything going so quietly and regularly as if the universe were a great machine. Instead of chance and its confusion we have God and His order. "He ruleth by His might forever" (Ps. 66: 7).

SHOWING OUR COLOURS

IN the twentieth Psalm there is a picture of a king who is about to go to war against his enemies. But before he sets forth to the battle he goes to Church to ask for God's help in his great adventure. And while he is there before the Lord the congregation cries out, "In the name of our God we will set up our banners." First of all they were going to show their colours for God.

To-day you boys and girls, as well as the rest of us, have to go forth to the battle against evil. Sometimes that evil is in your own way and sometimes it stands as a stumbling block in the way of some one else. You are soldiers of the cross. The first thing that is necessary is to show your colours. Just let the world know on what side you stand by the flag you fly. But how will you fly this right flag?

Did you ever see the new Christian flag?

It is made of the same colours as the Stars and Stripes only there are no stripes and no stars. The Christian flag is a white flag with a square of blue in the upper left hand corner; just as in our national emblem. But in this blue square instead of white stars there is a red cross. And these colours all stand for something.

The white stands for purity and this, of course, ought to be found in the Christian's own heart. The blue stands for loyalty to our Lord Christ and to His Church. And the red stands for sacrifice which we must make in behalf of others. Now this is a fine Christian standard, isn't it? And this is the flag which you can fly and this is how to show your colours for God.

These are colours of character and everybody would immediately recognise a Christian if he set up a character-banner made out of these colours. If men could see our purity of life, our loyalty of spirit and our sacrifice of blood they too would flock to our standard and we should have a real army with which to battle for our Lord. Before we fly any colours we

need to have a real banner to fly. This is it — purity, loyalty, sacrifice.

Then, when we have these colours of character let us show them. Tell the world every time just where you stand. Be true soldiers of the cross. Wage a good warfare for these things for which we stand. If you ever see anything either in your way or in the way of some one else as regards just these things remove it. As a soldier of your great Captain always remember that you are showing your colours for purity of heart, loyalty to Christ and sacrifice for others.

THE BIBLE'S UNTAMEABLE ANIMAL

I WONDER if you children know what animal it is which is mentioned in the Bible and of which it is written that no man can tame it. Perhaps you are trying to guess it.

It is not the birds of the air which seem to be able to fly anywhere they please, for we know that these can easily be tamed. Indeed, I have seen even a tamed crow, while perhaps some of you are able to tame robins or blue jays or song sparrows so that they will come and sit on your wrist and eat out of your hand.

Neither is it the wild beasts of the forest or desert, like the lion or the bear, for even these too can be tamed. And I have read of people who have had as pets tamed snakes or alligators. It is none of these. Do you ask what is this untameable animal then? In the Epistle of James (3:8) we read, "The tongue can no man tame." Then the Bible's untameable animal is the tongue.

This is, indeed, a savage animal at times, for it sort of breaks loose and attacks people, and often without a cause, and it only leaves them after they have been wounded very seriously. It may even say such mean or unkind things about others that they will be killed in reputation or influence.

But, what should be done with such an animal? If we can't tame other wild animals what do we do with them? Perhaps we put them in a cage where they can't hurt anybody. If we have a savage dog we usually put a chain upon him and tie him fast so that he won't bite any one. That is, we control these fellows and make them our servants. Let us do that with the tongue.

There is a little chain in your throats which, though it can't be seen, nevertheless runs from the tongue to the heart. And I think the way to control this animal, the tongue, is to tie it fast to this chain. Consequently, the tongue will only say the things which the heart may want it to.

I notice that this is, indeed, true. When

people say mean things they have meanness in their hearts and, on the other hand, when they say kind things they have kindness in their hearts. Out of the abundance of their hearts the tongues speak. Thus we can make our tongues do our bidding — by feeding them with the proper things from the storehouse of the heart. If the heart is right the tongue will also be right, for it does only the things which the heart tells it to do. Control the animal, therefore, by the chain which runs from the heart.

THE CONQUERING LAMB

OF course you children have all seen sheep out in the pasture with their little lambs by their side. And these lambs always look so gentle and harmless, don't they? They look as if they would never hurt anything, indeed, as if they would never want to get into any conflict by all means.

Yet in the Book of Revelation (17: 14) there is this text: "The Lamb shall overcome them." And doesn't it sound strange to read about a gentle lamb overcoming anything? Yet the text says that the Lamb will overcome ten kings with their armies. Just think of it! And it is just because of this gentleness that the Lamb will get the victory.

I have read a fable of a contest between the North Wind and the South Wind to see which one could strip the cloak first from a traveller.

First, the North Wind blew and it struck

the pilgrim like a blow, unrolled the shawl, tore the ends into tatters; but the traveller only drew his cloak up tighter around himself.

Then the South Wind blew and, instead of a fierce blast, it blew gently and gave the pilgrim the warmth which satisfied his heart and almost before he knew it the traveller had thrown his cloak aside. The South Wind had won the contest by its soft and gentle warmth.

Some men in the world are like the North Wind. [They bluster, scold, get angry, lose their temper and get nothing accomplished. Then there are others like the South Wind, who are gentle and mild and, like the Lamb, they overcome. Their soft answers turn away wrath not only, they also conquer all things.

Now Jesus is this Conquering Lamb. No one was ever so gentle as He and yet to-day He is overcoming this world with its kings and armies, not by force or might, but by His Gospel of love and gentleness. The Christian Minister or missionary takes only love in his heart as he goes out to win the world for Jesus; he never takes a sword. He follows in the

steps of the Master. It is not by might nor by power but by our Lord's spirit of gentleness that we shall conquer this world for our Lord Christ. If you boys and girls want to be missionaries day by day just where you are now living, and I hope that you do want to, remember that it is the gentle lamb which overcomes.

So, also, is it in our touch with others. If some one is cross to you just try gentleness on him and see if that won't overcome his crossness. If any one gets angry and loses his temper and scolds and finds fault in that way you just conquer all of that temper or anger, by being lamb-like to him. Overcome the evil of anger by the good of gentleness. And this is a sure way. Only a brute would be hateful to people who replied by being gentle.

And boys and girls especially can be lamb-like. Indeed, all mothers think that children are dear lambs even if they are nothing else; and perhaps you will remember having been called thus. Well, if you are lambs then to you belongs the victory. But you will have to be

gentle to overcome. Let us, then, try to be gentle for Jesus in order that we may win victories for Him. Then we too shall be conquering Lambs, conquering for Christ.

THE END

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